

ATHANASIUS
CONVICTED OF FORGERY

WHISTON

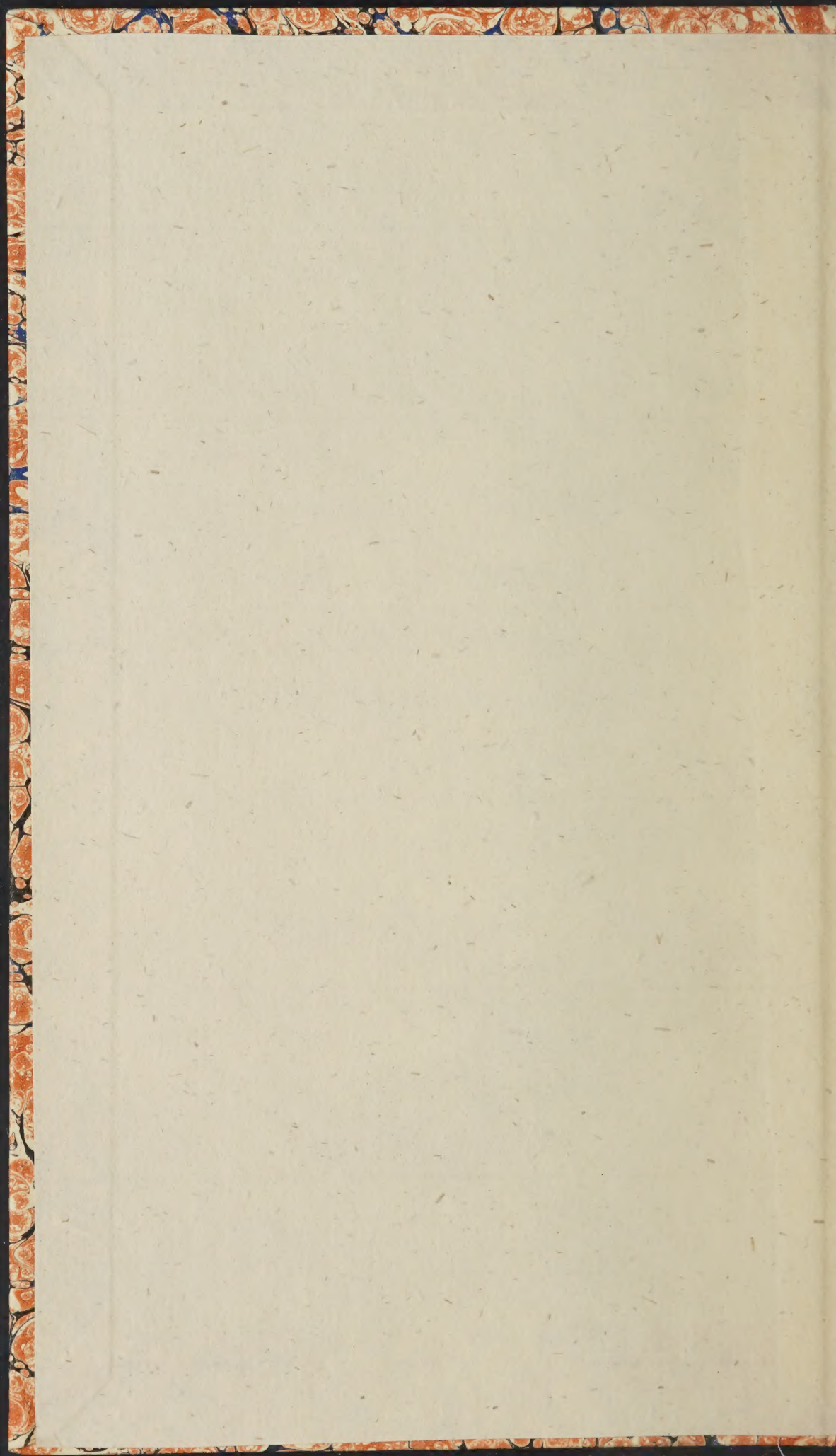
1712

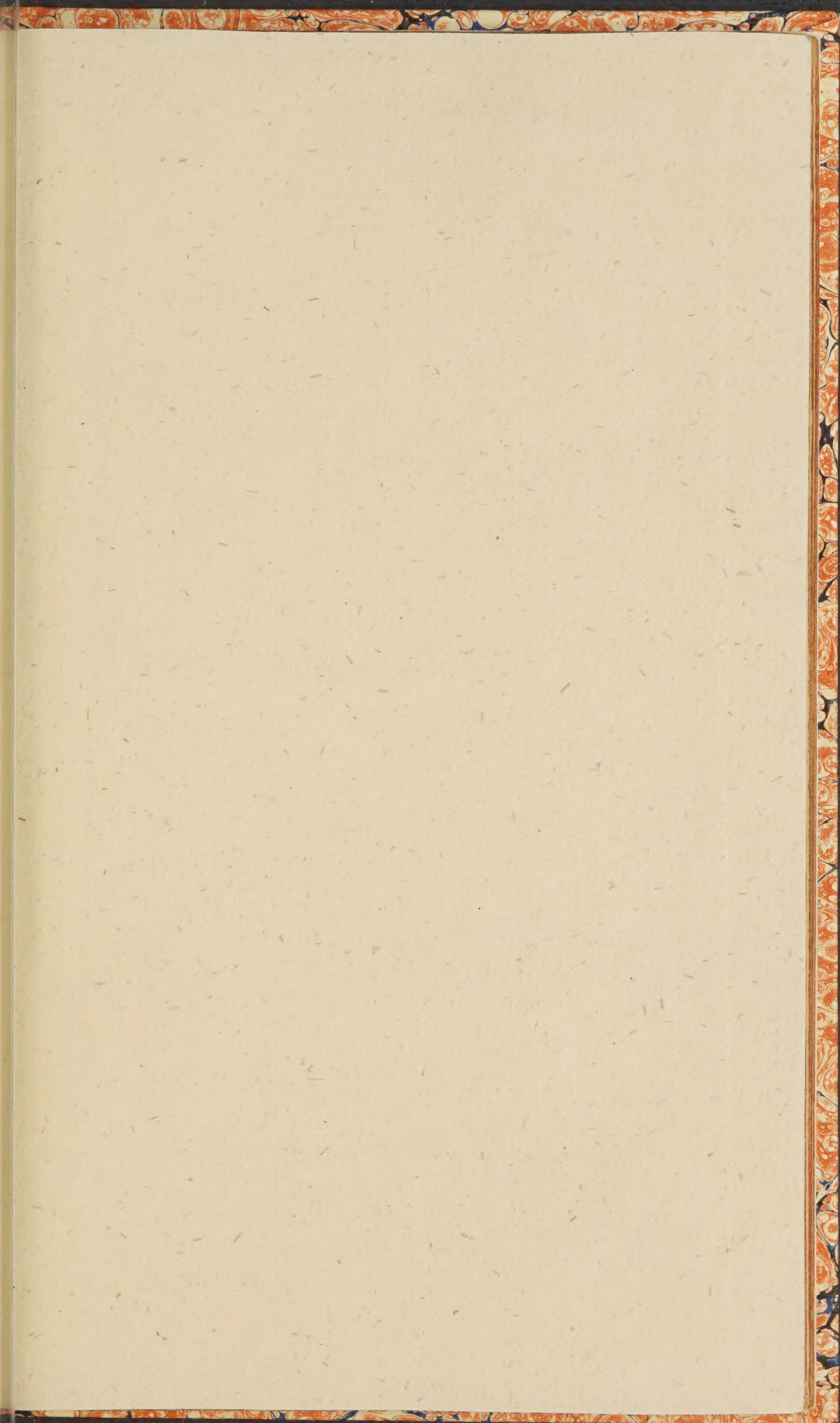


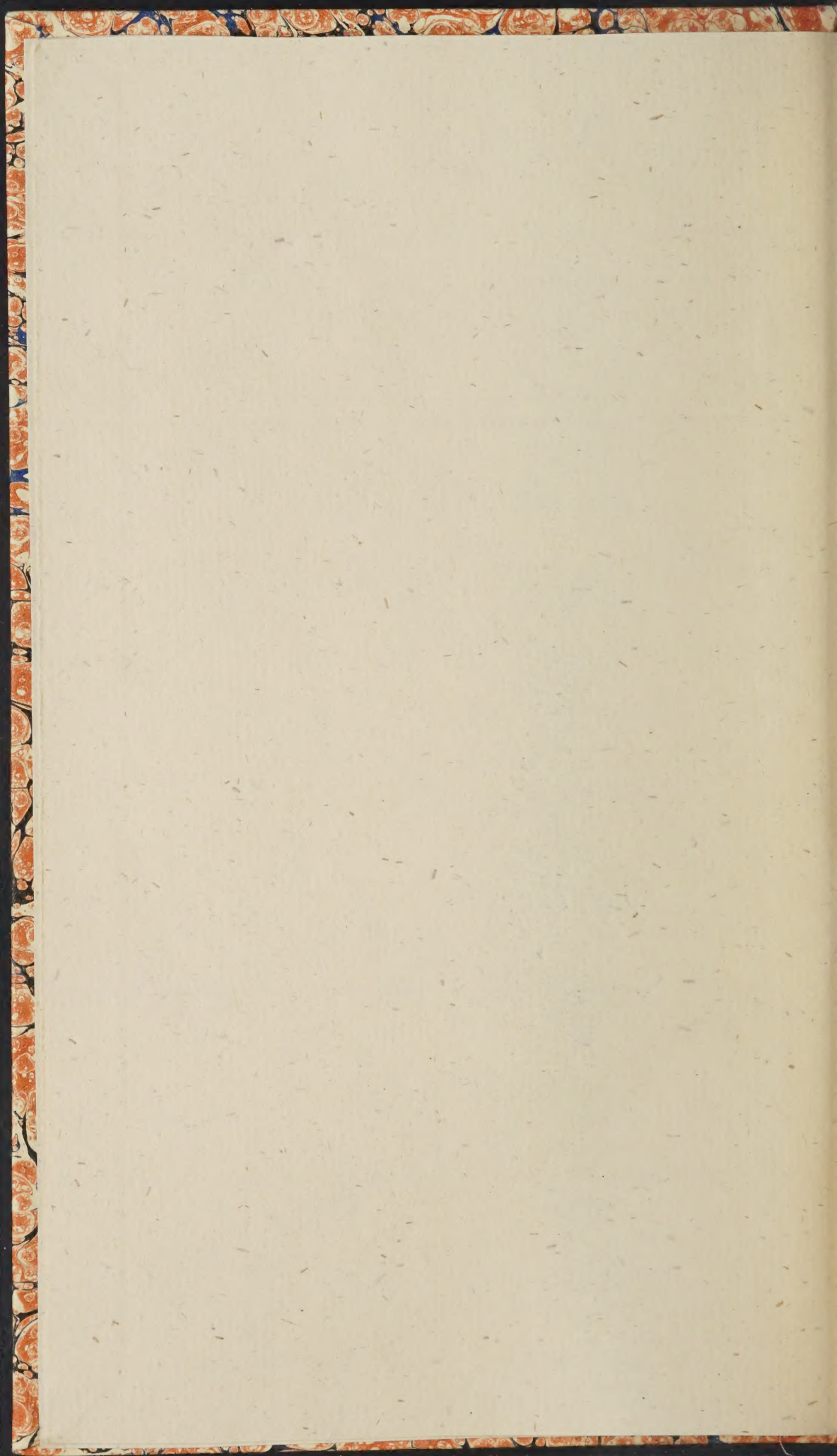


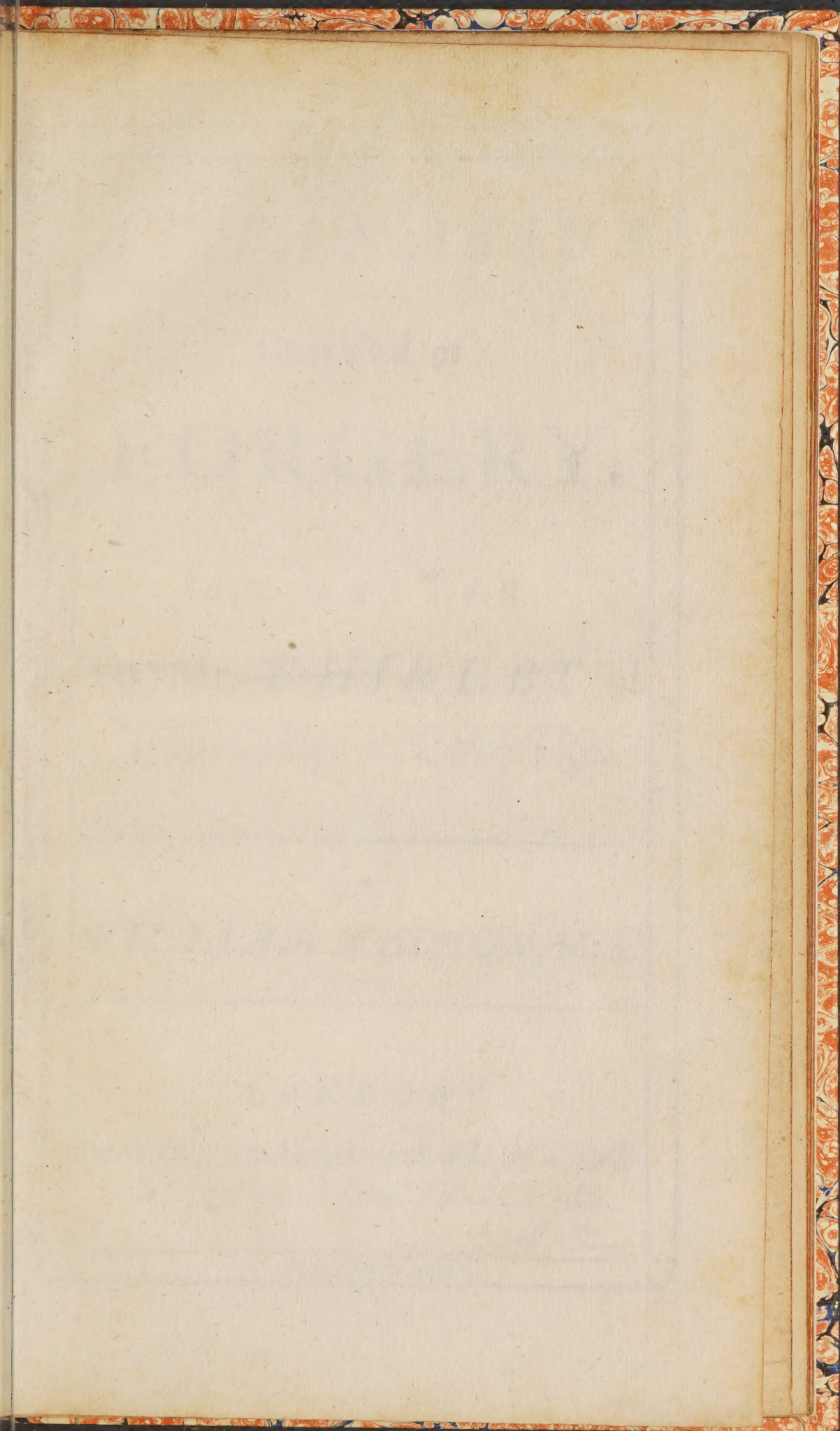


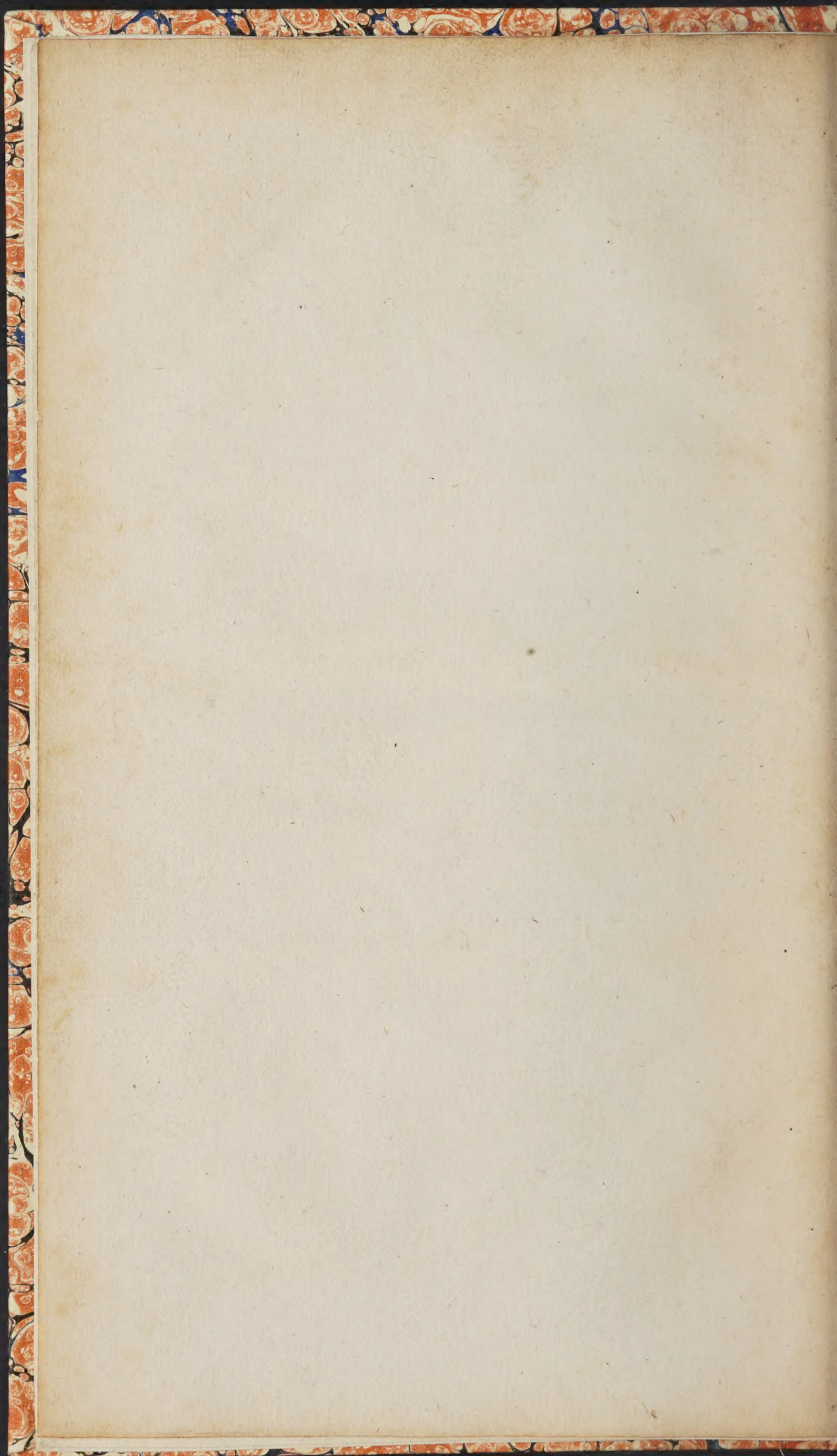












ATHANASIUS

Convicted of

FORGERY.

In a LETTER

To Mr. *THIRLBY* of
Jesus-College in Cambridge.

BY

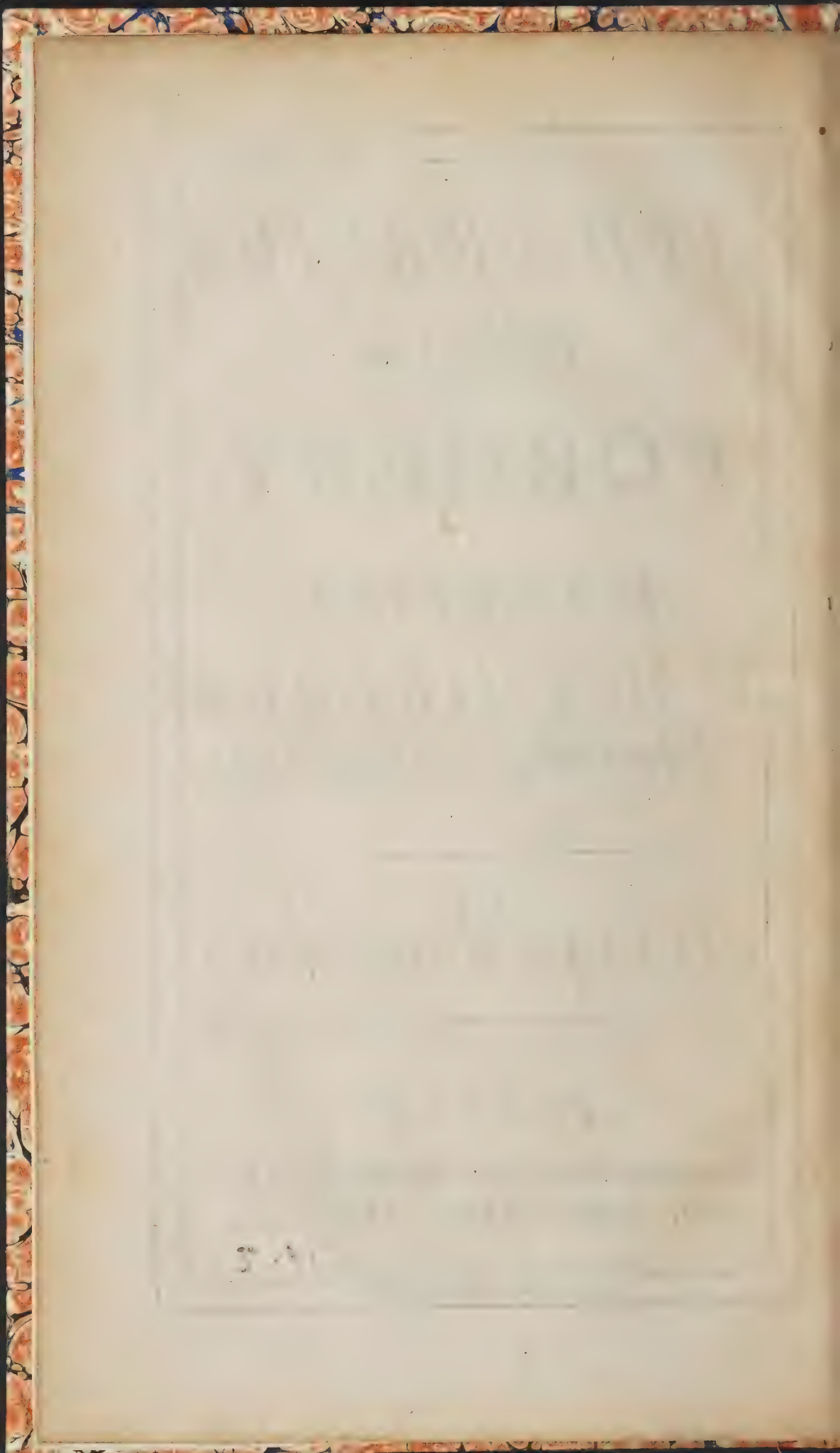
WILLIAM WHISTON, M.A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author ; and Sold by *A. Baldwin*, in *Warwick-Lane.* MDCCXII.

C14:2

Price Three-pence.



ATHANASIUS

Convicted of FORGERY.

In a Letter, &c.

S I R,

SINCE you have been pleas'd to take so much Notice of those few Pages in my *Historical Preface*, which contain some Reasons for that *Suspicion* I had entertain'd as to the Sincerity of *Athanasius*, and have been also pleas'd to endeavour to vindicate his Reputation in an entire Book; [written, as it seems to me, much after the way of him whom you defend;] I presume to send you the following not *Conjectural Suspicion*, but *Certain Account* of an evident *Interpolation* or *Forgery* of his; and this in one of those you will own to be the most Fundamental Articles of our Religion. And that you may not think it a contemptible Discovery, on account of its Author, I must inform you that it is very little owing to my self; but chiefly to Two other Learned and Judicious Persons: From the one of which I received the first Intimation, and several

of the Proofs for this Interpolation ; and from the other, the farther Examination, and almost all the remaining Evidence thereof ; and the fixing that Interpolation upon its true Author, the famous *Athanasius*. Yet, that the Reader may not fear being himself impos'd upon herein, I have taken the pains my self to search out the Testimonies and Quotations referr'd to by them ; and have added some few new ones, with several additional Observations and Corollaries of my own, for his more compleat Satisfaction.

But because, Sir, you may probably expect that upon such an Occasion I should let you know some of my Thoughts upon your former *Answer to my Suspicions* concerning the same *Athanasius*, I will so long delay this my main Design, as to endeavour to give you Satisfaction in that Matter : Which I shall do under these *Preliminary Observations*, and the succeeding *Reflections*.

(1.) I observe that you all along require *full Proof*, and *undoubted Evidence*, where I set down my Thoughts only under the Notion of *Suspicions*. Sure I may have sufficient Foundation, vehemently to *suspect* a Person's Integrity, and to guard my self against any ill Designs he may have upon me, without being able fully to *demonstrate* him guilty of Knavery, in a Court of Justice : Especially when the World knows, that the *Athanasians* have long ago dropp'd or suppress'd those opposite *Arian* Accounts, and many of those Original Records, which were likely to tend so much to their Disadvantage ; and which yet must in general be absolutely necessary
in

in such a Method of demonstrative Evidence,
or legal Conviction.

(2.) I observe, that *Athanasius's* Pleas and Accounts are not early enough for our Satisfaction in these Matters ; as beginning not till about 27 Years after the Council of *Nice*, and about 14 after those of *Tyre*, *Jerusalem*, and *Constantinople* ; when the Affairs of *Marcellus* and *Athanasius*, so far as they are of any great Importance, and relate to the Original *Arian* Controversy, were chiefly concern'd. Nor do I see any other Occasion for that long Silence, but this ; That they and their Opinions were almost sunk, during a great part of that Interval, in all the *Eastern* Parts ; and that, if the Church of *Rome* had not supported them, we had heard but little more either of them, or their pernicious Doctrines, to this very day.

(3.) I observe, that the Vindications of *Athanasius* depend generally upon the single Authority of *Athanasius*, either at the first or second hand ; and must stand or fall with it. Thus, where *Basil*, *Nazianzen*, *Socrates*, or the like *Athanasians*, either very probably might have, or certainly had their Accounts from *Athanasius*, yet do the Orthodox quote them commonly as distinct Authentick Witnesses, for his Vindication.

Now this, in the Case of *Socrates* at least, the principal Witness for him, cannot but be esteem'd by all impartial Judges a gross Imposition ; since himself largely and fully assures us, that he alter'd these Parts of his History, which he at first had chiefly taken out of *Rufinus*, to accommodate it to the Accounts of

Hist Eccl.
L. II. C 1.
P. 79, 80.

Atha-

Athanasius; and that he did not add the Copies of his Records till then. *Sozomen* appears considerably to follow *Socrates*; and by Consequence *Athanasius*, whom he followed: And even *Theodorit*, who has been the most diligent, and faithful, and produc'd many things that were omitted by the rest, and among them not a few Copies of Original Records, does not seldom follow and transcribe from *Athanasius* also. This Observation is a mighty weakning to their Attestation on his behalf; as it is a great strengthening to the same Persons Attestations whenever they appear against him. So that indeed the ancient, but more inaccurate *Rufinus*; and the later, but more accurate *Theodorit*, are plainly the most valuable Historians, as to this Matter; and that of the Two others, *Sozomen* is of the next Authority, and *Socrates* of the least: Yet so that none of their Testimonies are to be compared with any Genuine Remains of *Eusebius*, or any such Original and Contemporary Writer; as is most highly reasonable on such an Occasion. And when once the *Athanasians* will condescend to this equitable way of Enquiry about their Leader, we will join Issue with them immediately. Tho' I cannot but believe the Learned among the *Athanasians* are too sensible what will be the Consequence of such a fair Method of Enquiry, about his Character and Reputation, to admit it; till they begin to be dispos'd to give up that his Character and Reputation for ever. However, when once the Orthodox will publickly put the Matter upon this Foot, I durst undertake publickly to satisfy them & the World, as to the Ignorance, Knavery, and Forgeries of *Athanasius*; how averse soever I am

am otherwise to any great Enquiries into the unhappy State of Things in and after that Fourth Century of the Church. But if they persist to refuse this Method of Procedure, 'tis to little Purpose to argue with them concerning him. However,

(4.) I observe farther, That when *Athanasius* says the weakest and most incredible Things possible for himself, yet do his Advocates eagerly take them up, and oblige us to believe them, without any other Original Authority. Thus he tells us, that *Arsenius* was alive and unhurt, when he was accus'd publickly of having murder'd him, and cut off his Hand; and he produces the Emperor's Letter to confirm it. I still think this an incredible Story; and want some Testimony distinct from that of *Athanasius*, that it was certainly known the true *Arsenius* was then alive and unhurt, and that the Emperor wrote that Letter to him. Yet does there no such Evidence appear, but rather the contrary. *Socrates* indeed says, that this *Arsenius* was forced to sign the very Sentence of Deposition against *Athanasius*, at this very Synod of Tyre, where he had been oblig'd publickly to appear, and so to confute the Accusation that he was murder'd. This does not well agree with the Circumstances in *Athanasius*. 'Tis pity however, that we have not the Authentick Acts of that Council to see how well they would confirm this *Athanasian* Story: which I own I am not yet able to believe. *Athanasius* also tells us, that the Deputies of the same Synod, when they came on purpose to give the Emperor *Constantine* an Account of the Crimes for which they had depos'd *Athanasius* wholly

See Answer, p. 45.
&c.

P. 51.

wholly omitted the Mention of any of them; and only accus'd him of an Attempt to hinder the Transportation of Corn to *Constantinople*. Here also do I want some better Evidence than *Athanasius's* for so strange a thing, especially when he was the Criminal, and engag'd to palliate his own Male-Administration, and to stifle the Accusations he lay under. In short, many of these *Athanasian* Stories are so awkward and improbable, that I cannot but suspend my Assent in these Cases, and entertain violent *Suspensions*, while I perceive there is at the Bottom nothing but *Athanasius's* own Affirmation in the Case. Nay, when *Basil* himself mentions *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*, as at last favouring the *Consubstantiality*, the Circumstances & Contents of his Passages seem to me so fairly to imply, that he had this Account from *Athanasius*, in whom it is, that he cannot, I think, be alledg'd with any Assurance as a separate Witness from him in that Matter. Much less can *Eusebius's* Mention of some of his Letters to his Name-sake of *Rome*, about the *Sabellian* Heresy, be quoted to confirm the same: since there is not the least Hint in him, that they really contain'd such Things as *Athanasius* cites from them. So that still this whole Story does not yet appear to be supported by any other Authority, but that of *Athanasius*; and so it is highly to be suspected, especially since we know that it contains such a Testimony for the *Consubstantiality*, as no where else appears so early; as is contrary to the Council of *Antioch* assembled about that very time; and contradicts the undoubted former Doctrine of the same *Dionysius*.

P. 96, 97.

P. 97, &c.

(5.) I observe, that not only the Accounts of the known *Arians*, when we meet with them, do frequently contradict those of *Athanasius*; but the other more authentick Accounts do so too: I mean those of *Eusebius*, *Epiphanius*, *Rufinus*, *Hilary*, *Phœbadius*, *Faustinus*, and *Marcellinus*; nay, not seldom those of *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret* also; altho' they were almost all of them *Athanasians*.

I do not here insist on *Philostorgius*, the *Arian* Historian, as probably himself an inaccurate and partial Writer; if *Photius* has given us a faithful *Epitome* of his History. Tho' I must expect, that wherever *Athanasius*'s own Testimony is admitted for himself, that of *Philostorgius* be not refus'd against him; since he cannot be suspected to be more prejudic'd on one Side, than the former was on the other.

(6.) I observe, that the best way for Satisfaction in all Cases, is the Perusal of the Original Books and Passages themselves, and not of those Accounts of them, which modern Party-men afford us from them. And to such an original Perusal 'tis, that I appeal on all Occasions.

Thus, in order to form a true Judgment whether *Athanasius* reasons strongly against the *Arians* or not, I desire the Honest and Judicious Reader to peruse his Orations and Discourses against them himself, and not to take even *Photius*'s Word for it. No more than a Wise Man in our Age would take the Word of a Zealous Papist for *Bellarmin*'s, of a Violent *Lutheran* for *Luther*'s, or of a Ri-

gid Calvinist for Calvin's Strength of Reasoning on the like Occasion.

P. 43, 44, 45. Thus, whether *Athanasius's* youthful Treatises, *Contra Gentes*, and *De Incarnatione Verbi*, do most favour the Notions and Language of the *Arians*, or of the *Athanasians*; I desire the impartial Enquirer to satisfy himself, by his own Perusal of them; and not to take any *Athanasian* Representation in that Case.

P. 73, &c. Thus I beg of the impartial Examiner, that he will read the Three Epistles of *Athanasius* to the Bishops of *Egypt* and *Libya*, to *Apion* or *Serapion*, and to the Monks, before he suffers himself to be put upon by this Writer, and believes that he had no Regard to the Story of *Arius's* Death, when he was so solicitous that no Copies should be taken of the two last-mention'd, but first-written Letters, wherein that Story is contain'd. I say *first-written Letters*, whatever the Editors and others suppose, merely to prevent *Athanasius's* Inconsistency with himself; as the plainest Chronological Character of 36 Years after the Condemnation of *Arius* by the Council of *Nice*, therein mention'd, does imply. I also insist on the like Perusal of those Letters, e're it is believ'd that either the Bishops of *Egypt* and *Libya*, or *Serapion*, with his Disputants, had ever heard of that Story before, tho' the Monks had; and that it may be consider'd, how little it tends to the Reputation thereof, that the very Bishops, as well as others, should scarce know any thing of it, at a time when the Monks were so much better acquainted with it in the Deserts.

S. 22.
P. 293.

Thus, whether the Stile and Language of the Citations *Athanasius* makes, from his pretended Copies of *Dionysius* of *Alexandria's* Letters

Letters to *Dionysius* of *Rome*, be agreeable to the Age of *Dionysius*, I expect the Honest Reader should himself read them in *Athanasius*, and compare them not only with the Doctrine of *Dionysius*, as deliver'd from a compleat Knowledge of his Works by *Basil*; but with the Stile of all the more certain Contemporary Pieces now extant. In particular, I desire some certain Parallel so early to this following Passage, which the *Benedictins* have now first restor'd from the MSS. ; and which, in their Preface, they say, ought to be written in Letters of Gold ; οὕτω ὡς ἡμεῖς εἰς τὴν ἑνότητα καὶ μονάδα παύνομεν, ἀδιάρητον καὶ ἑνότητα πάλιν ἀμείνω εἰς τὴν μονάδα συγκαταλάμβανον. Accordingly we extend the Unity into the Trinity, without Division ; And again we conjoin the Trinity into the Unity, without Diminution. Tho' indeed that high Expression of the Editors is a plain Sign, that this is not the usual Language of that Age ; otherwise there would be no great Occasion for setting so high a Value on the Passage before us.

Epist. 41.
ad Maxim.

Athanas.
de Sentent. Dionys. § 17.
p. 255.

Thus also, whether *Hilary* and *Phæbadius* agree with *Athanasius's* Account of the Fall of *Hosius*, I desire their own Words may be read as they wrote them ; and that no other partial and prejudic'd Representation may be allow'd to be of any Authority. And that the like original Account in *Faustinus's* and *Marcellinus's* Letter to the Emperors, about *Hosius's* Character when he died, in Contradiction to *Athanasius*, may be a little consider'd ; tho' Mr. *Thirlby*, by calling them two violent *Luciferian Schismatics*, endeavours to set their Authority aside immediately.

P. 108, &c

In Reality, so far as I can judge of that Eminent Person's Conduct in these Matters ; As he dislik'd the Rash and Novel Expressions of *Arius* , and his peculiar Followers ; and thereupon heartily join'd against them, both at and after the Council of *Nice* ; so did he in some time, join heartily against *Athanasius* and his Followers, when he perceiv'd they took Occasion from the Condemnation of the former, to introduce a more Dangerous Heresy on the other Extreme. Which, by the way, seems to me to have been the very Case, as to the Conduct of *Constantine* the Emperor also, in the same Matter. But to return.

P. 57, &c. (7.) I observe, that the Miracles of *Anthony* the Monk, and of others that succeeded in great Numbers, are so unlike the true ones of Christ and his Apostles, and so like those *wonders of a lye*, foretold to be current under Antichrist ; have so evidently tended to support Notions and Practices that have no Foundations in the Earliest Antiquity ; were first pretended to at a time when the old Miracles of the Gospel were so far ceas'd ; and generally belong'd to such Desert Places where little good Evidence was to be expected ; and are said to be chiefly done among such ignorant and superstitious Monks, that there is the greatest Occasion imaginable for *Suspicion* about them ; and by consequence about their Grand Historian *Athanasius*. And if the Honest Reader will observe it, the latest Admirers, Abridgers, and Publishers of *Athanasius's* Works, do commonly appear very uneasy at this Life of *Anthony* ; and very willing, were not its Genuineness undeniable, to

2 Theff.
II. 9.

to drop it among the Spurious Writings ascribed to him.

However, before the Reader pass over this great Reason for *Suspicion*, I must beg of him to peruse that Life, ere he fixes his Opinion: And if he be thereupon satisfy'd that all was really true and divine, I shall give him leave to suppose *Athanasius* to be entirely honest, and innocent; only upon this equal Condition, that he will also declare that he as firmly believes such Miracles in the Church of *Rome*, as are much of the same Nature, and not worse attested to than the other.

(8.) I observe, that when the *Athanasians* alledge any Fathers or Synods on their Side, their Authority is presently sacred; and a mighty Noise is made, if the *Arians* happen to be dissatisfy'd at any of their Language or Proceedings. While, if the *Arians* quote any the like Authorities on their Side, as they may that of almost all the *Antenicene* Fathers; with that of † many Councils, especially of the Council of *Antioch* in the Third, and several of the same Place in the Fourth Century; of *Tyre*, of *Jerusalem*, of *Constantinople*, of *Seleucia*, and *Ariminum*; (the two last of which were contemporary, and in effect one Council; and were indeed much the most Numerous Body of Christian Bishops, from both the *East* and *West*, that ever

† Οἱ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἑαυτῶν δόξαι περὶ πλείον καὶ ἀπὸ περὶ πο-
 μεν συνόδοις κ. τ. λ. — τῇ περὶ βαλλομένων ὄχλον συνό-
 δων περὶ φάσει πίστεως, τὴν ἐν ἀειμῶν, τὴν ἐν σιμῶν, τὴν ἐν τῇ
 ἰταυρία, τὴν ἐν τῇ δαμάκῃ, τὰς ἐν κωνσταντινουπόλει, τὰς ἐν ἀν-
 ποχείᾳ πολλὰς καὶ ἀτάκτους.

Athanas.
 Ep. ad Afr.
 § 3. p. 893.
 §. 10. p.
 899.

met together about these Matters :) their Characters are gone, and the very Synods are abus'd and expos'd, as rather *Heretical Conventicles*, than Famous Councils of the Church.

P. 54.

For Example: 'The Synod of *Tyre* is, with Mr. *Thirlby*, by no means a true Ecclesiastical Synod; but only a Cabal of 60 outrageous Party-men; a Conspiracy rather than a Council; a Convention of Hereticks, sitting in Inquisition upon the Orthodox *Athanasius*. And somewhat the like Character do the Orthodox give the Writers and Councils that were against them perpetually; without any other tolerable Foundation than this, that they were against *Athanasius* and his Proceedings. And this they do, even in Cases where all their Evidence depends on the Criminal's own single Accounts, against Entire Councils of Bishops, who heard his Cause, and after such Hearing condemned him. Now, till the Writers on that Side will put on some more Impartiality on such Occasions, 'tis perfectly in vain to debate Matters of this Nature with them; and they must ever believe that *Athanasius* was a *fair honest Man*, because himself, and those that say after him, do not tell them that he was a *Knave*.

These *Observations* premis'd, I make the following *Reflections* on Mr. *Thirlby's* Answers; and that somewhat in his own way. For if I may but allow my self a little of his Liberty of representing Things, or of putting Colours upon them, the Sum of his Answers to my Seventeen Suspicions comes to this:

(1.) That

(1.) That Party-men, and violent Party-men, may still not be great Knaves; especially if they be persecuted. [Not considering that *Arius* will on both these Accounts have an equal Title to Integrity with *Athanasius* himself.] P.11,--16.

(2.) That the *Athanasians*, who alter'd the Language and Practices of Christians, because they do not tell us they intended to alter the *Faith it self*, are not to be esteemed dangerous to the Church. This will certainly vindicate all the Hereticks in the World; who, to be sure, will not directly tell us they intend to *alter the Faith it self*; while the Honest Christian will still think, that the surest way of preventing the Alteration of the *Faith it self*, is not to alter either the *Language* or *Practices* of the Gospel: Both which the *Athanasians* most certainly did. But that
' A Creed is not at all the worse for being a contested one, as Mr. *Thirlby* affirms, I hope he will find few good Christians in this Age; excepting some through-pac'd *Athanasians*, that will believe him. 16,--27. 20, 21.

(3.) Mr. *Thirlby* pleads, that my Character of *Athanasius* is false; because 'tis not agreeable to his own Accounts of himself, and to the Opinion his own Party have long had of him. 28,--40.

(4.) That *Epiphanius's* Account of the Origin of the *Melitians* must be false; because 'tis probable it came from themselves; and the contrary Account must be true, because it comes from *Athanasius*. 40,--43.

(5.) That

43, 44, 45. (5.) That tho' *Athanasius's* first Treatises have not much that is like the *Athanasian* Notions and Language afterward; yet are we to suppose that they mean the same Things; because they were written by *Athanasius*, who cannot be suppos'd ever to have contradicted himself in these Matters.

45,---57. (6.) That tho' the *Arians* did a long time publickly accuse *Athanasius* of the Murder of *Arsenius*; and that perhaps after the Time when he says he had openly produc'd him alive: And tho' that Emperor, whose pretended Letter expresses his Surprize at that Impudence of his Adversaries, soon banish'd him notwithstanding; yet are *Athanasius* and his Followers to be believed, that he was certainly then alive, and that Letter of the Emperor genuine.

57,---69. (7.) *Athanasius's* Account of *Anthony's* Miracles is not to be suspected, since it does not directly tell you they were to serve the Turn of a Party; and since many Admirers of *Athanasius*, and of Monckery, tell us several Stories, as well attested, of the like Miracles done by others afterwards; especially since the apparent Inconsistencies therein, may by some artful Turns be tolerably reconcil'd, or excus'd.

69,---72. (8.) Tho' *Eusebius's* Character of the principal *Arians* be contrary to that of *Athanasius*, yet is the latter, who was Orthodox, more to be believ'd than the former, who was a sort of *Arian*. And if *Marcellus*, the Companion of *Athanasius*, was an Heretick,
we

we are to own that *Athanasius* at last discarded him as such : But if he was not, we may believe that he ever supported him.

(9.) That we must believe *Arius* died by a Divine Stroke, notwithstanding the Uncertainty of the Accounts; the Chronological Inconsistencies; the *Arians* Denial of it; the no Mention of it in 20 Years by any body, nor in 40 Years by any but *Athanasius*; and he only on *Macarius's* Information; the Unacquaintedness of the Bishops of *Egypt* and *Lybia*, especially of *Serapion* and his Disputants, with it, till it was so long afterward written by *Athanasius* to them; and this in the very Countrey to which *Arius* belong'd; and while the first Accounts were not to be transcrib'd, but return'd safe to the Author. That is, we must believe such a strange Event upon the weakest Evidence imaginable, and this of violent Enemies only; which in other parallel Cases we should hardly believe upon the strongest Testimony of the most impartial Persons.

(10,) (11,) (12,) (13,) (14.) We must believe *Athanasius's* Authority to be so sacred and inviolable, that let the Suspicions look never so strong, let the Assertions he quotes be never so extravagant; let them be never so contrary to the known Opinions of the same Authors, and to other Ancient Testimonies concerning them; Let *Petavius*, nay let *Origen*, *Basil*, *Ferom*, *Photius*, and others, say what they please to the contrary; He is still to be believed before and against them all: And there can be no sufficient Reason given,

to doubt of his Honesty and Fairness, in any Case whatsoever.

101,--108. (15.) That the Council of *Antioch*, when they condemned the *Consubstantiality* in express Terms, did yet agree with the Council of *Nice*, who establish'd it ; because, tho' others have fail'd, Mr. *Thirlby* is able to suppose how they may be reconcil'd in those their direct Contradictions ; tho' he cannot pretend to have the least Original Evidence for such a Reconciliation.

108,--113. (16) That tho' *Hilary* & *Phæbadius* do almost expressly contradict *Athanasius* about the *Arianism* of *Hosius* ; and tho' *Faustinus* and *Marcellinus* do expressly contradict him therein ; yet is *Athanasius* to be believed before them all, whatever they may say about that Matter.

113,--115. (17.) That because I express my self with Modesty and Caution in some Cases, where the Nature of the Things requir'd it, and I had not alledg'd my Evidence in particular, I am to be suppos'd to have not much to say farther ; and so I am to be laugh'd out of Countenance for all these my *Suspensions concerning* *Athanasius*. While on the contrary, I am well assur'd that those *Suspensions* are, for the main, very well-grounded ; and that I have a great deal of Evidence which has not yet been produc'd for their further Confirmation. Only the Cause of Orthodoxy does so very much depend on *Athanasius's* Reputation & Reasonings, that he *must* be vindicated ; and all the most violent *Suspensions* in the World *must* be run down and stifled ; if not by Argument

gument and Evidence, yet by high Words, and over-bearing Authority.

So much, Sir, shall suffice ~~at~~ present, by way of Reply to your Answer. For as to all your general hard Words, ill-grounded Reproaches, and despiteful Language, &c. they require no Answer on my Side; but Repentance on yours; which I heartily pray you may come to, and may then obtain Pardon at the Hands of God, for this your Unchristian Treatment of me. And as for your particular personal Reflections upon me, as if I had contradicted my self in several Points; had lately turned about, and yielded *Novatian* to the Orthodox; that I expect the *Millennium* in about Four Years; nay, that I have attempted to injure my Successors, by cutting down Timber unfairly on the Lands of my Professorship; all which Matters yet signify nothing to the Points in Question; I hope the Honest Reader will better examine the Foundations of such rash and false Insinuations, before he believes them.

I shall however confess, that I have run into two great Mistakes of late; the one about the Genuineness of the *Arabick MSS.* at Oxford; and the other about the Council of Nice's supposed Condemnation of the Term *Created*, as apply'd to our Saviour; but must inform the Reader, they have both directly come upon me, because I was not suspicious enough, as to *Athanasian Interpolation and Forgery* in these Cases: As the Reader will see in my distinct Accounts of those Matters; the one given formerly, and the other to be given presently in this Paper. Which sort of Mistakes, how they can, with any

P. 85, 93.

P. 108.

Hist. Pref.

P. 135.

Append.

p. 45, &c.

Remarks

on Dr.

Grabe, p.

41,---48;

Shew of Fairness or Modesty, be charg'd upon me, in way of Reproach; at least by the *Athanasians*, I do by no means understand. Only I hope that these Impositions upon me formerly by the *Athanasians* will make me cautious, how I am again Impos'd upon by any of them, whether ancient or modern, in such Matters.

And now Sir, after all this, I proceed to my main Design; or to give you and the World, not so much a new *Suspicion*, as an *undoubted Instance* of the Dishonesty of *Athanasius*; which, if you think you can properly *Answer* by half so good Arguments, or half so numerous Testimonies, I doubt not but the Publick will hear again from you; but if not, I hope you will not trouble the World any further with any ill-grounded *Amusements* about the *Honesty* and *Integrity* of *Athanasius*.

And here, for greater Perspicuity, I shall reduce the Evidence I have to alledge, to these Three Propositions; to be distinctly prov'd in their Order: To demonstrate,

(1.) That *Athanasius* does several times directly affirm; that the Council of *Nice* did, even in their solemn *Anathema's*, condemn the *Arians* for saying that our Saviour was *Created*; and that he put abroad Copies of those *Anathema's*, with the Insertion of that Clause, as condemned by them.

(2.) That yet 'tis certain this Council did not insert the Word *Created* into those *Anathema's*; but rather, by omitting it, did directly avoid its Condemnation.

(3.) That therefore *Athanasius* was guilty of a known and wilful *Falsity* and *Interpolation*,

on, in this important Matter ; and of voluntarily propagating a notorious Forgery over the Christian World.

I shall first set down these *Anathema's* at large, from the usual Copies ; and then prove the several Propositions.

Τὸς δὲ λέγοντας ἦν ποτὲ ὅτε ἐκ ἧν· καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῆναι ἐκ ἧν· καὶ ὅτι ἐξ ἐκόντων ἐγένετο· ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως, ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας φάσκοντες εἶναι, [ἢ κτιστὸν,] ἢ τρεπτόν, ἢ ἀλλοιωτὸν τὸ ὕον τῷ ὕμῳ, τέτυκτο ἀναθεματίζει ἡ καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία.

Concil.
Labb. p.
27.
Socrat.
Hist. Eccl.
L. I. C. 8.
p. 25. & ali-
bi passim.

But for such as say, There was a Duration when he was not ; And that he was not before he was begotten ; And that he was made out of nothing ; Or that say, that the Son of God was of another Substance, or Essence, [or that he was created,] or mutable, or changeable ; those the Catholick and Apostolick Church does anathematize.

I come now to my Propositions, and assert,

I. That *Athanasius* does several times directly affirm, that the Council of *Nice* did, even in their Solemn *Anathema's*, condemn the *Arians* for saying that our Saviour was Created ; and put abroad Copies of those *Anathema's*, with the Insertion of that Clause, as condemned by them. This appears by the following plain Passages in his Works.

Πάντων τε, says he in one place, ὑπογεγραμμένων ὑπὲρ γε φαν καὶ οἱ παρὰ Εὐσεβίον τέτοις τοῖς ῥήμασιν, οἷς ἀπὸ πάντων νῦν ἔτοι· λέγω δὲ, τῷ ἐκ τῆς ἐξ ἑσῆς, καὶ τῷ ὁμοούσιῳ, καὶ ὅτι μήτε κτισμα, ἢ ποίημα, μήτε τῶν γεννητῶν ὅτιν οὐ τῷ Θεῷ ὕμῳ. i. e. When all had subscribed, the *Eusebians* also sub-

A. D. 352.
Athanas.
de Decret.
Synod.
Nicæn.
S. 3. p. 210.

scribed

scribed to those very Words which they now find fault with ; I mean, that he was from the Substance of God, and that he was Consubstantial ; and that the Son of God is not a *Being created*, or a *Being made*, or one of the Beings that were made.

S. 20. p. 226.

And elsewhere, καὶ ὅτε τῶτο γράψαντες εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον, τὰς ἡ λέγοντας ὅτι ἐκ ὄντων ἢ ὅν Θεῶν, ἢ κτιστὸν, ἢ πρεσβύτην, ἢ ποιήματα, ἢ ὅτι ἐτέρας ὑστάς, τέτοις ἀναθεματίζει ἡ ἀγία καὶ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία· κ. τ. λ.

For when they had written that, they immediately added, That the Holy and Catholick Church does anathematize those that say the Son of God was made out of nothing, or was *created*, or was mutable, or was a *Being made*, or was of any other Substance, &c.

A.D. 368.

Ad Afr. S. συνέδος, τὰς λέγοντας κτίσμα, ἢ ποιήματα κ. τ. λ. ---

9. p. 898.

Vid. Sect.

5. p. 895.

διὰ τὸ τοῦτο καὶ οἱ πατέρες εἰρηκότες ὁμοόσιον εἶπεν ὅτι ὅν, ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς, τὰς ἡ λέγοντας κτίσμα, ἢ ποιήματα, ἢ ὅτι ἐκ ὄντων, ἢ ἢν ποτε ὅτε ἐκ ἢν, ἀναθεματίζει ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία· κ. τ. λ.

Let them then, as the Synod enjoind, anathematize those that say that he is a *Being created*, or a *Being made*, &c.----- For on this account it was, that when the Fathers had said the Son was *Consubstantial*, they immediately added, that the Catholick Church anathematizes those that say he was a *Being Created*, or a *Being Made* ; or was made out of nothing, or that there was a *Duration* when he was not, &c.

This also appears, as to the Second Part of this Proposition, [viz. That he not only affirm'd this himself, but that he published Copies of the *Nicene Creed* and its *Anathema's*,

ma's, with the Term *Created* among those that it condemned:] by those two Copies of them now extant in his Works. The one is in his own and his Synod's Name, to the Emperor *Jovian*; wherein they exhort him to keep close to the *Nicene* Faith; and send him a Copy of its Creed, with its *Anathema's*; among which, in all the MSS. are these words, *ὁ κτισθὲν*, or *that he was created*. And that it was so in the Ancient MSS. also, there is no doubt, since *Theodorit* has the very same Words in his Copy of that Letter to *Jovian*, in all his MSS. also. The other is in the Name of the Great *Eusebius*, when *Athanasius* publish'd his Letter from that Council to his Diocese; wherein the same Words, *ὁ κτισθὲν*, or *that he was created*, are found in all the Copies; and that it was so in the Ancient MSS. there is no Reason to doubt, since both *Socrates*, and *Gelasius Cyzicenus*, those famous Transcribers from, and Followers of *Athanasius*, have the same Words in their Copies of that Letter of *Eusebius* also; which, as we shall see anon, they could have from no other Copy but that of *Athanasius*. For I assert,

A. D. 363.
Op. p. 781,
782.

A. D. 450.
Hist. Ec-
cles. l. 4. c.
3. p. 154.

De De-
cret. Sy-
nod. Ni-
cæn. in
calce §. 4.
p. 240.
Soc. Hist.
Eccl. l. 1.
c. 8. p. 25.
Gelas. ap.
Labbe.
Tom II.
c. 35. p.
256.

II. That 'tis certain this Council did not insert the Word *Created* into those *Anathema's*; but rather, by omitting it, did directly avoid its Condemnation.

Now this Proposition I shall prove, by the going over all the several numerous Copies and Accounts of those *Anathema's* that have been observ'd in Antiquity, during the entire Fourth and Fifth Centuries of the Church.

(1.) We have a true Copy of *Eusebius's* Letter to his Diocese, in *Theodorit*; which indeed is

A. D. 325.
Hist. Eccl.
l. 1. c. 12.
p. 38.

is the only one that appears distinct from that publish'd by *Athanasius*; and in this Copy, in all the MSS. these Words are entirely wanting. Now that this Copy in *Theodorit* is the true one, and not that in *Athanasius*, *Socrates*, and *Gelasius*, we are well assur'd by *Eusebius*'s own Testimony in all the Copies of that Letter: For,

A. D. 325.
Ubi supra. (2.) *Eusebius* himself, in the Body of that very Letter, goes over the several Disputable Points which he had signed, when he signed the *Nicene* Creed and its *Anathema's*; and gives his own Church the Sense in which, and the Reasons for which he signed every one of them respectively; but not a Syllable of this Condemnation of the Term *Created*. Nor could he possibly have signed the Condemnation of that, on his own Principles; which were to keep close to the Words of Scripture, under every Article; while all Christians, I think, did then own, that the Scripture did expressly say our Saviour *was created*. Nor would the *Arian Eusebius* certainly interpolate that Council's *Anathema's*, and put in these Words, on purpose to condemn his Friends the *Arians*. So that 'tis evident, *Eusebius*'s Original Letter had not those Words: Tho' 'tis as evident, that *Athanasius* has them inserted into his Copy thereof.

A. D. 345.
Catech. V.
Sect. 8.
P. 76. (3.) *Cyril* of *Jerusalem*, in his ordinary MSS. has not the *Nicene* Creed at all: But in the Two best MSS. of that Author, noted *Roe*, and *Casaubon*, he has a compleat Copy of the same; and that as including the *Anathema's* also; but so that they both entirely omit the Words before us. So that if this Creed does any way belong to *Cyril* himself,

self, we have here a most ancient and very authentick *Eastern* Attestation against the Insertion of this Clause : But if it was added by the Transcribers afterwards, as is very probable, yet does it thence appear however, that when and where the Originals of those MSS. were written, no such Clause was own'd as a Part of the *Nicene Anathema's*.

(4.) Hilary of Poitiers, in his Book Of Synods, has an entire *Latin* Copy of the *Nicene Creed* and *Anathema's*, but without this Clause. And if we remember that he wrote this Book when he was in his *Asiatick* Banishment, not far from *Nice* it self, where the Council was held, we cannot but allow this to be a very authentic *Eastern* Attestation against it.

A. D. 359.
Sect. 84.
P. 391.

(5.) About the same time, Lucifer of Cagliari in *Sardinia* gives us the compleat *Nicene Creed*, with its *Anathema's*, but without a Syllable of the Clause in Question ; and so is a valuable *Western* Attestation against it.

A. D. 360.
Ad Constant. Sect.
84 p. 265.

(6.) The Author of the Exposition of the Creed, among the Works of *Athanasius*, does also entirely omit the same Clause. So that in case he were really *Athanasius*, we should have his own direct Testimony against himself, as to this Matter : But tho' that be not very probable, yet is it plainly a full Testimony of a strong *Athanasian* against him herein.

A. D. 370.
Op. Athanas. p.
1278,
1279.

(7.) Basil, Bishop of *Cæsarea* in *Cappadocia*, has also two entire Copies of the *Nicene Creed*, with its *Anathema's* ; but not the least mention of the present Clause ; and is therefore a most authentick *Eastern* Witness against its being genuine.

A. D. 372.
Op. Tom. II. Ep. 60.
p. 836. &
Ep. 78. p.
892.

(8.) Epiphanius, Bishop of *Salamis* in *Cyprus*, gives us two Creeds : The former very like
D the

A. D. 373.
Anchorat.
Op. T. II.
p. 123, 124

the *Nicene Creed*, as it was afterward improved by the Council of *Constantinople* ; with *Anathema's*, like the *Nicene*, at the End : The latter something like that under the former Head, with the like *Anathema's* ; in both which this Clause is entirely omitted. So that here we have another Eminent *Eastern Witness* against it.

A. D. 377. (9.) *Ambrose*, Bishop of *Milan*, has also an entire Copy of these *Nicene Anathema's* ; but not a Syllable of the present Clause : Who is therefore another noted *Western Evidence* against it.
De Fide Op. Tom. II. Col. 467.

A. D. 377. (10.) The unknown Author of a Work, *de Fide Orthodoxâ contra Arianos*, inserted both among *Ambrose's* and among *Nazianzen's Works*, begins with the *Nicene Creed*, and its *Anathema's* ; but wholly omits the Clause before us.
Ambros. Append. Col. 345. Nazianz. Orat. 49. p. 727.

(11.) *Rufinus*, the earliest of the Ecclesiastical Historians after *Eusebius*, has a complete Copy of the *Nicene Creed*, and its *Anathema's* ; but no Sign of this Clause. And so we have another *Western Testimony* that it is not genuine. Nay, we have almost another Testimony here also, that *Socrates* took it into his Copy of *Eusebius's Letter* from *Athanasius* ; since *Rufinus*, from whom otherwise he must most probably have taken it, had it not himself in his Copy.
A. D. 400. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 6. p. 186.

(12.) The *African Copy* of this Creed, and its *Anathema's*, brought from the very Council of *Nice* it self, by *Cæcilian* then Bishop of *Carthage*, and solemnly read in a famous Council held at that Place afterward ; nay, and publickly inserted into its Acts ; has not a Syllable of this Clause ; and so is another authentick *Western Testimony* against it. Hear the Solemn Words of this Council, and the publick
A. D. 419. Cod. Can. Afric. ap. Dionys. Exig. p. 117. & ap. Bevereg. Pandect. Vol I. p. 513, 514.

Man

Manner of promulgating their Original Copy of the Nicene Creed therein: *Aurelius Episcopus dixit; Etiam quæ dudum vestræ charitati intimavimus, nunc patimini exemplaria statutorum Nicæni Concilij, sed & quæ hic salubriter à nostris decessoribus, secundum ejusdem Concilij formam, vel quæ nunc à nobis ordinata sunt, recitari, & gestis inferi. Omne Concilium dixit, Exemplaria Fidei, & Statuta Nicænæ Synodi, quæ ad nostrum Concilium per beatæ recordationis olim prædecessorem tuæ sanctitatis, qui interfuit, Cæcilianum Episcopum, adlata sunt; sed & quæ Patres, ea exempla sequentes, hic constituerunt, vel nunc communi tractatu statuimus, his gestis ecclesiasticis inserta manebunt: &c.* Aurelius the Bishop said; Permit that to be now done which we formerly desir'd of your Charity; I mean, that a Copy of the Decrees of the Council of Nice, as also what has been here prudently ordain'd by our Predecessors, or is now ordain'd by us, in Compliance with the Design of the same Council, be recited, and inserted into our Acts. The whole Council said; Those Copies of the Creed, together with the Decrees of the Nicene Synod, which were brought to our Council by Bishop Cæcilian, your Holiness's Predecessor, of Blessed Memory, who was there present; as also what our Forefathers, in Imitation of them, did ordain here; and what we now, after mutual Deliberation, do ordain, shall be inserted into these Ecclesiastical Acts, and stand there. &c. And 'tis here to be noted, That as the Latin Acts themselves have not this Clause, so neither has the Greek Version of those Acts, still extant, any Signs thereof.

(13,) (14.) At the same Council of Carthage, where the Pope of Rome had so early

Bevereg.
Pandeſt.
Vol. I. p.
674, &c.
See
Geddes
Miscell.
at the End.

pleaded a forged Canon of the Council of *Nice* for Appeals to *Rome*, and endeavour'd to bring the *African* Churches under his Power thereby ; a ſolemn Meſſage was ſent to two of the Patriarchal Churches of *Conſtantinople* and *Alexandria*, for authentick Transcripts of the Creed and Canons of the Council of *Nice*, as they appear'd in their Archives. Which Churches ſoon return'd them ſuch authentick Copies ; and they were both found exactly to agree with their own Copy, brought from *Nice* by *Cæcilian* ; and, by conſequence, had not the Clause before us. So that Three of the moſt famous Churches of the World, who had every one of them Original Copies of the Acts of the Council of *Nice*, and among them that of *Conſtantinople*, very near *Nice* it ſelf ; and that of *Alexandria*, the Seat of *Athanaſius*, are moſt plain Atteſtations againſt it. The Acts of the Second General Council, that of *Conſtantinople*, have no Copy of the *Nicene* Creed inſerted ; and ſo are unconcern'd in the Diſpute. Only while we know that the Copy of that very Patriarchal Church where they aſſembled had not this Clause, there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe it could have been in the Acts of that Council, had they contain'd a Copy of the *Nicene* Creed. But then,

A. D. 431.
Ap. Labb
Tom. III.
Col. 672.
1183.

(15.) In the Acts of the Third General Council, that of *Ephesus*, near the Middle of the Chriſtian World, the *Nicene* Creed, with its *Anathema's*, is ſeveral times repeated. In all which Copies, whether in the *Greek* Originals, or *Latin* Versions, this Clause is entirely omitted.

A. D. 445.
Hiſt. Eccl.
l. I. c. 21.
p. 435.

(16.) *Sozomen*, the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian, gives us an exact Account of theſe *Nicene Anathema's* ; but has not a Syllable of the preſent Clause

Clause therein ; and so is another very valuable *Eastern* Witness against it.

(17.) In the Acts of the Fourth General Council, that of *Chalcedon*, the *Nicene Creed*, with its *Anathema's*, is several times repeated : In all which Copies, whether in the *Greek* Originals, or *Latin* Version, this Clause is entirely omitted. And these Copies are the more highly remarkable, as belonging to a Council which was held in *Bitbunia*, the very Country wherein the Council of *Nice* it self was celebrated.

(18.) To conclude our Enquiries with the Fifth Century ; (and 'tis to little purpose to go lower) *Gelasius Cyzicenus* himself, that great Producer of Spurious Records, and Follower of *Athanasius*, tho' he has the Clause before us in his Spurious Copy of *Eusebius's* Letter, as *Athanasius* and *Socrates* had before him ; yet when he elsewhere directly sets down the *Nicene Creed* and *Anathema's* by themselves, he entirely omits it ; as if even He had never met with it in any distinct Copies.

So that upon the whole, all the Ancient Evidence, that can be suppos'd, of *Original Writers*, of *Ecclesiastical Historians*, of the strongest *Athanasians*, of *Patriarchal Churches*, of *General Councils*, of *Writers and Records* in all Parts of the Christian World, and at the nearest Distance as to Time and Place ; those I mean which appear not to have copied from *Athanasius* himself ; do unanimously agree, that the Council of *Nice* did not *Anathematize* those that said our Saviour was Created.

Corollary. There is therefore little Reason to doubt, but the Words *κτίζεσθαι* and *ποιεσθαι*, a Being created, and a Being made, which are in *Socrates's* Copy of the Synodical Epistle of the

A. D. 451.
Ap. Labb.
Tom. IV.
Col. 339,
342, 563,
285, 286.

A. D. 476.

A. A. Synod. Nicæn. c. 26.
ap. Labb.
Tom. II.
p. 226.

Hist.
Eccl. l. i.
c. 9. p. 28

Nicene Council, as condemned by them, are no better than *Athanasian* Interpolation & Forgery also. For we not only know that this Council did not condemn one of them; as we have just now proved; but are to observe, that *Theodorit's* genuine Copy of the same Synodical Epistle wants both those Words; as even *Gelasius's* wants the latter of them. Nor does it appear that any Original Author but *Athanasius* himself, asserted that they did any where condemn them.

Hist. Eccl.
L. I. C. 6.
p. 30.
Gelas. c.
33. ap. Lab.
p. 249.

III. *Athanasius* therefore, who affirm'd that that Council did *Anathematize* those that said our Saviour was *Created*, and who inserted that Part of their *Anathematism* into *Eusebius's* Copy to his Diocese, and into his own and his Council's Copy to *Jovian*, was guilty of a known and wilful Falsity and Interpolation in this important Matter, and of Propagating a Notorious Forgery over the Christian World. For, that this Interpolation and Forgery was *wilful*, and done *on purpose*, appears, because,

(1.) *Athanasius* was present at the Council of *Nice*, and a great Manager there; and so could not but very well know what it was they condemn'd and anathematiz'd.

(2.) *Athanasius*, however, could not involuntarily insert this Clause into *Eusebius's* Letter; where 'tis plain it really was not; had he never so much believed that it was genuine in it self. This was a bold Stroke with a witness; not only himself to Impose on the Church, by his own Interpolated Copy, but to make the World believe, that the Great *Eusebius* did attest to the same Interpolation, contrary to plain Fact, and the other Accounts of the same *Eusebius*, even in *Athanasius's* own Copy of that very Letter.

(3.) A-

(3.) *Athanasius's* very Church of *Alexandria's* Copy had not this Interpolation, as we have seen. So that 'tis morally certain, that *Athanasius* was not unacquainted with the true Copy, and so as certain, that this Interpolation of his was voluntary.

Corollary (1). *Athanasius* is therefore never to be depended on, in any Accounts which tend to his own Support, and the Support of Orthodoxy, without the strongest Collateral Evidence. He that would not scruple to Impose on the Church in this most Sacred Point of all, would hardly scruple the Cheating it in Matters of less Importance.

Coroll. (2). The greatest Part of the Current History of the Church in the Fourth Century, while *Athanasius* liv'd, relying chiefly upon his single Credit at the last, is of small Authority, and cannot be depended on by us.

Coroll. (3). All those Novel Doctrines, Terms of Art, and Practices which were mainly introduc'd into the Church by *Athanasius*, are highly to be suspected as Spurious and Heretical; since he appears to have brought in his own Notions, Language and Practices, by the same dishonest Methods, that the Old Hereticks first made use of against Christianity.

Coroll. (4). Because such Instances of Fraud, Interpolation and Dishonesty, do not appear among the Christians or Catholicks till the Days of *Athanasius*; and yet appear so frequently ever since among his Followers; our Old Genuine Christianity is not to be at all charg'd with, or suspected of any Prevarication and Insincerity on this Account.

Coroll. (5). ' Since the Council of *Nice* it self, which ventur'd to say that our Saviour
' was

‘ was begotten, but not made ; and which was so
 ‘ very angry at the Followers of *Arius*, for their
 ‘ real or pretended *Abuse* of the Words *Created &*
 ‘ *Creature*, in that Case ; yet durst not, and did
 ‘ not condemn the *Use* of them ; we may
 ‘ thence learn , that this Council knew the
 ‘ Sacred and Primitive Writers had certainly
 ‘ made use of them ; and that their Autho-
 ‘ rity among Christians was then esteem’d
 ‘ plainly undeniable.

Apr. 17. I am, S I R,
 1712. With all due Respect,
 Your very Humble Servant,
 WILL. WHISTON.

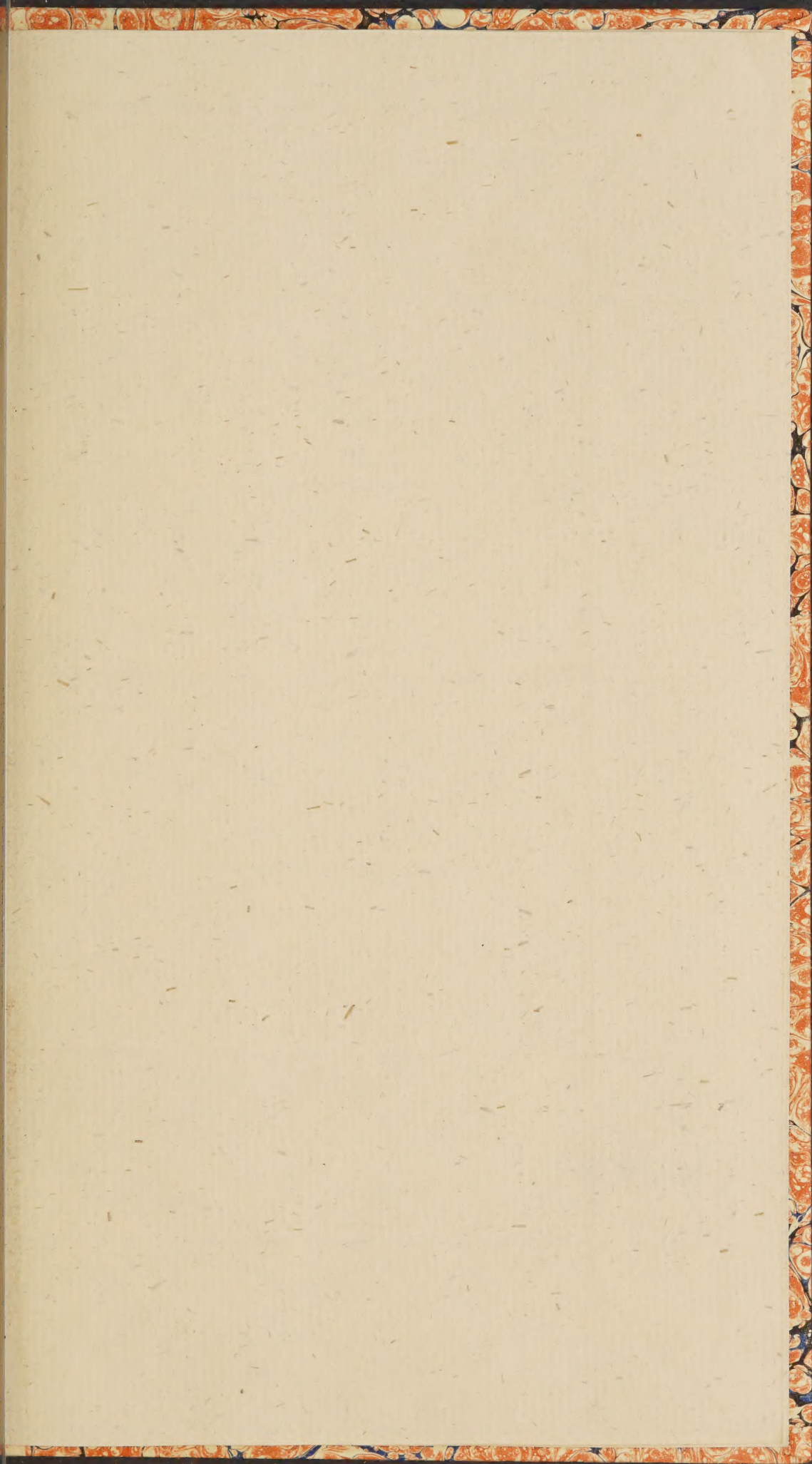
A Compleat Catalogue of the Writings of the
 A U T H O R.

1. A New Theory of the Earth, 2d. Edit. 8vo.
2. Chronology of the Old Testament, and Harmony of the 4 Evangelists, 4to.
3. Essay upon the Revelations, 4to.
4. Fulfilling of Scripture-Prophecies ; at Mr. Boyle's Lectures, 8vo.
5. Sermons and Essays on several Subjects, 8vo.
6. A Memorial for Setting up Charity-Schools in England and Wales, Half a Sheet.
7. Collection of small Tracts against Dr. *Alix*, Dr. *Grabe*, Dr. *Smalbrooke*, &c, 8vo.
8. Primitive Christianity Reviv'd, 4 Vol. 8vo.
9. The Supposal ; or a New Scheme of Government. Half a Sheet.
10. *Athanasius* Convicted of Forgery, 8vo.

D E T I N.

1. *Praelectiones Astronomicae*, 8vo.
2. *Euclidis Elementa*, 8vo.
3. *V. C. Algebra Elementa*, 8vo.
4. *Praelectiones Physico-Mathematicae*, 8vo.

All Sold by the Author, at the Lower-End of Cross-Street, Hatton-Garden.



BR -
1720
.A7
W5
1712
C.1

Bib Fict

4102657

13448

